

MINUTES FROM WHS SCHOOL COUNCIL - APPROVED
JANUARY 25, 2022

A meeting of the Wayland High School School Council was held remotely at 6:00 p.m. on January 25, 2022.

Present and participating remotely were:

Allyson Mizoguchi (School Principal)
Karen Brown (Parent Representative)
Shavon Drayton (Parent Representative)
Lilly Watkins (Parent Representative)
Madeeha Syeda (Student Representative)
Robin Sklar (Community Representative)
Win Treese (Community Representative)
Mike Hopps (Staff Representative)
Jill Swenson (Staff Representative)

Absent were:

Erin Gibbons (Parent Representative)
Zachary Mittelsteadt (Student Representative)

Meeting Minutes:

The meeting was conducted remotely due to the COVID-19 health pandemic and according to the revised open meeting law that allows remote participation.

1. Allyson Mizoguchi called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Roll call was taken:

<u>ROLL CALL</u>	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
Allyson Mizoguchi (School Principal)	X	
Karen Brown (Parent Representative)	X	
Shavon Drayton (Parent Representative)	X	
Erin Gibbons (Parent Representative)		X
Lilly Watkins (Parent Representative)	X	
Robin Sklar (Community Representative)	X	
Win Treese (Community Representative)	X	
Zachary Mittelsteadt (Student Representative)		X
Madeeha Syeda (Student Representative)	X	
Mike Hopps (Staff Representative)	X	
Jill Swenson (Staff Representative)	X	

2. Public comment

- Allyson framed this School Council as a “Presentation and Forum” on the 2018 School Committee decision to eliminate the reporting of Weighted GPA. She introduced guests: Caroline Han, WPS Director of Diversity, Equity, and Belonging; Marybeth Sacramone, WHS Director of Counseling; and Drew Carter, Deputy Director of Admissions at the College of the Holy Cross.
- Stephanie Brandaleone: In many cases it is true that colleges will recalculate GPA but some won't. Some opportunities will only look at calculated GPA offered and won't calculate. An exception was performed for the class of 2022. Why not let students shine in their best light on the transcript and request a weighted GPA for transcript purposes.
- Jenna Brandaleone (read via Stephanie Brandaleone): Class of 2021 graduate. Having a weighted GPA was incredibly important to her. Freshman at a Big 10 school and in Honors college. If her academic performance had only been displayed as an unweighted GPA, would not have gotten into Honors College because needed a 3.9. The honors program offers lots of priority things: housing, classes, friends, etc. Opportunities like hers will be missed without a weighted GPA.
- Jeff Sklar: Doesn't have a pro/con opinion on weighted GPA but strong opinion that there should always be community input. Believes that the process was flawed and circumvented the open meeting law. WSPN published an article opposing it. The voice of the community needs to be heard before a decision can be made.
- Jody Pongrantz: Parent of three WHS graduates and does contract work at the high school. Also works in town, spent 23 years at Wayland Youth and Family Service. Has a finger on the pulse of the stress level of the students. The push to take honors/AP classes, anything that will bump up the weighted GPA, adds to the pressure/stress on students. Worked to get rid of the weighted GPA. Does alumni interviewing for Harvard, and when interviewing students who have a weighted GPA, finds that students wouldn't take electives if they bring GPA down. Applauds decision to get rid of weighted GPA.
- Mark Liddell: Metco coordinator at WHS. When the weighted GPA was removed from WHS, he was pleased because of the immense stress that it places on students and the degree to which it shapes their schedules. Missing out on opportunities in arts and other electives, makes them less well rounded students.

Motion to extend period for public comments: Robin Sklar

Second: Karen Brown

ROLL CALL	YES	NO
Allyson Mizoguchi (School Principal)	X	
Karen Brown (Parent Representative)	X	
Shavon Drayton (Parent Representative)	X	
Lilly Watkins (Parent Representative)	X	
Robin Sklar (Community Representative)	X	
Win Treese (Community Representative)	X	
Madeeha Syeda (Student Representative)	X	
Mike Hopps (Staff Representative)	X	
Jill Swenson (Staff Representative)	X	

- Sejal Srinivasan: Jody mentioned that one of the reasons that the change was made in 2017 was to reduce the stress level. Concerned that there is demotivation happening because students feel like they aren't getting the "credit" in the GPA. Those other things (growth, learning) are "really valuable" but the reality is that they are in this really competitive environment and are we causing them a different kind of stress. Also asked the question: If you are a college that gets tens of thousands of applicants, are they recalculating it for everyone or is there some kind of cut off and then they recalculate?
- Alexia Obar: Concerned about lack of open conversation when decision was made. Has a child who goes to a large state university in the honors program who never would have gotten in without a weighted GPA and scholarships require weighted GPA. Pointed out honors electives and said students should take those. This is against what all their friends in other districts are doing.
- Sharon Burke: Son is a senior, first class with unweighted GPA. Said that anecdotally there have been a lot of kids in Wayland getting deferred and rejected and one has to wonder about weighted GPA. Are we an outlier?
- Kamala Grasso: Agree with the stress level. Stretching to go to an honors level without the weighted GPA doesn't make it worth it. Our students are also outliers with how we calculated it with COVID, and now they are not counting test scores. Requested clarification with what happened with the athlete and the weighted GPA?

Allyson responded that Weighted GPA can still be calculated and it can still be used in situations if weighted GPA is needed. An exception wasn't made. The calculation is possible, it's just not reported on our transcript and it's not something that we do to measure students.

- Robin asked if WHS eliminated weighted GPA because it didn't want class rank. Allyson explained that WHS does not report class rank and has not for years.

3. Presentation

Allyson presented “Weighted GPA Slide Show for School Council, January 2022.”

Allyson turned floor over to guests:

- Drew Carter:
 - Defined “recalculation of GPA” – When a transcript comes into an admissions, in both recalc/not recalc situations, the school GPA is ignored.
 - Schools that recalculate create their own GPA using the student’s transcript and grades.
 - 80-85% of colleges ignore the GPA on the transcript and use their own formula. In most cases, what the school reports it to be is meaningless.
 - The remaining schools that do not recalculate the GPA essentially ignore this figure. The school then looks at grades, course selection, rigor, setting of high school, community, AP testing, etc.
 - In both of those situations, the same thing is happening: the college is doing an evaluation of the student’s transcript with their own rubric. They give an academic rating to the student. The school is still coming to their own decision about the work done by the grades on the transcript.
 - Drew has spoken to a lot of groups about the move from weighted to unweighted. The decision is all about mental health. In decades he has never been asked once about moving in the opposite direction. Most of the competitive students in our applicant pool have unweighted GPA. For this presentation, Drew spoke to a lot of schools (high power, Big 10) and they do not use weighted GPA to calculate admissions and scholarships.
 - In response to the question about colleges that have thousands of applicants, Drew said that no matter what the process is, when there is less information available, it just puts more emphasis on what is available. So the school’s evaluation of the transcript might carry more weight.
 - Very few schools will admit to cut offs; some schools do it, but only after their evaluation of the student’s initial transcript. Their cutoff is only based on what they calculate as the student’s “score.” There is no cut off based on the reported GPA from school.

Robin Sklar asked a question about the athlete example from earlier in the forum. Allyson said that it was not a hidden calculation and any parent or student can calculate it if they want to.

- Caroline Han:
 - Caroline explained that she was invited to apply an equity lens on the issue.
 - We know that a baby's life outcomes can be predicted from birth: life expectancy, academic achievement, earnings, etc. The two strongest predictors of a student's success in school are race and family's socioeconomic status (income, occupation, education level).
 - She acknowledged the opinion of, "Why not just use WGPA if it helps just one student," but asked that we think of the students who might be hurt by that. Think of the students taking the not honors/AP classes who work just as hard and would be disadvantaged by the advantage given to the honors/AP students.
 - Wayland mirrors other communities in that the majority of our students in honors and AP classes are white/east Asian. To get into honors and AP classes requires the social and cultural capital of knowledge of how to get there. The sorting is not devoid of race or class.

- Marybeth Sacramone:
 - Described successful admissions among senior class this year.
 - Implored that we remember that this is a pandemic.
 - Even before the pandemic, we were needing more counselors and mental health workers. Suicidal attempts are up, we support students in so many ways here and the weighted GPA would hurt our students.
 - Stated that other districts have followed us in this decision.

Allyson stated that, since some comments/questions from the chat were not answered during the forum, she will share the zoom chat with members in order to surface large themes from discussion.

4. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn: Jill Swenson

Second: Robin Sklar

ROLL CALL	YES	NO
Allyson Mizoguchi (School Principal)	X	
Karen Brown (Parent Representative)	X	
Shavon Drayton (Parent Representative)	X	
Lilly Watkins (Parent Representative)	X	
Robin Sklar (Community Representative)	X	
Win Treese (Community Representative)	X	
Madeeha Syeda (Student Representative)	X	

Mike Hopps (Staff Representative)	X
Jill Swenson (Staff Representative)	X

Respectfully submitted,

Jill Swenson (staff representative)
Allyson Mizoguchi (Principal/co-chair)

Related documents:

“Weighted GPA Slide Show for School Council Forum January 2022”